



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

PUBLICATIONS  
OF THE  
Modern Language Association of America.  
1907.

---

VOL. XXII, 4.

NEW SERIES, VOL. XV, 4.

---

XXI.—THE EARL OF WARWICK'S *VIRELAI*.

I.

The career of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, from 1401 to 1439 is hardly to be equalled in the annals of chivalry, even by that earlier Richard, Cœur-de-Lion. It is no part of this introductory note to his *Virelai*, to rehearse in detail the extraordinary events of his long life of travel, adventure, warfare, and diplomacy. Mr. James Gairdner's life of the hero<sup>1</sup> tells the story of his chief exploits, and those to whom Dugdale's *Warwickshire*<sup>2</sup> is accessible may read it in detail. But to come upon a literary personality in the fifteenth century is so rare a thing, and the character of Richard Beauchamp is so happy an example of a true knight of the Middle Ages, that these few notes upon him and his family, most of them not in Gairdner's article, will not come amiss to the student of the period.

<sup>1</sup> In the *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. iv, article Richard Beauchamp.

<sup>2</sup> Edition of 1730, vol. i, 405-411.

When Henry IV married Joan of Navarre, this young knight "kepte joustes for the Queenes part ageynst alle other commers." At the battle of Shrewsbury (1403), he behaved himself notably, and received the Garter for reward. Soon after he went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, on the way stopping to fight a fierce duel of battle-axes with Sir Pandulf Malatete at Verona, and wounding him sorely. Arriving in his noble ship at the Holy Land, he went up to the Holy Sepulchre and hung up his arms in that place. Baltir-dam, the Soldan's lieutenant and governor of Jerusalem, hearing that a descendant of Guy of Warwick was in the town (whose life he had in his own tongue, a tribute to the popularity of the story), feasted Richard finely. Richard returned through "Russy, Littowe, Poleyn, and Spruse," and in this journey "got him greet worship at many turnaments, and other faites of werre."

At Calais, about 1414, he held jousts against three French knights in noble manner, as is hereinafter related. At the Council of Constance he slew a mighty duke of Germany in tournament. The Empress was so enraptured at this, says the veracious chronicler, that she threw over him the livery of the Bear, as reward for his prowess.<sup>1</sup>

Of his other deeds there is no space to tell. He was made Master to Henry VI in 1422, and the agreement made by Richard in assuming charge of the one year old boy, with the other nobles of the realm, in which they solemnly swear to acquit him of lese majesté when the Earl shall see fit to administer corporal chastisement to his

<sup>1</sup>These events are told in Dugdale, *loc. cit.*, who used as his source the episodic accounts explaining the famous drawings of the life of this Earl, in MS. British Museum Cotton Julius E IV, pt. II. For a full account of the drawings (reproduced by Strutt in *Manners and Customs*, vol. II), see Sir E. M. Thompson in the *Burlington Magazine*, vol. I (1903), pp. 151-164. He gives much of the text, with four drawings.

Sovereign, contrasts amusingly with his brilliant career in arms.<sup>1</sup> But Richard feared the babe's wrath more than armed men, and wisely, too.

He founded the chantry at Guy's Cliff perhaps as early as 1423,<sup>2</sup> and it was his daughter, Margaret, Countess of Shrewsbury, wife of the Talbot whom Shakespeare has made known to us, who employed Lydgate to write the life of their legendary progenitor.<sup>3</sup> Richard was himself a patron of the fashionable poet of his time. In 1426 Lydgate defended in verse Henry VI's title to France, at Warwick's command.<sup>4</sup> And if we may credit John Shirley, the famous scribe, upon whose authority alone these other facts given are based, Warwick had no little share in getting Lydgate to write his *Life of St. Edmund*.<sup>5</sup> At all events, there is MS. evidence for the fact that one of Lydgate's best poems, *The Fifteen Joys and Sorrows of Mary*, was written for Isabella, Lady Despenser, his second wife, whom Richard married in 1422, and to whom the *Virelai* here printed was dedicated.<sup>6</sup>

The pictures of Warwick in the famous Cotton Manuscript<sup>7</sup> give a wonderfully vivid impression of the man.

<sup>1</sup> Printed in Gairdner's *Paston Letters*, article I.

<sup>2</sup> Thompson's date. Others are given.

<sup>3</sup> So Shirley in Harley 7333 and the Harvard Shirley MS.

<sup>4</sup> So Shirley in Harley 7333, printed in Wright, *Political Songs* (Rolls Series), II, 131-140. Lydgate tells us this in his poem, also.

<sup>5</sup> So Shirley in the same MS.

<sup>6</sup> So the rubric in Cotton MS. Titus A xxvi, a good xv century text. It calls Isabelle, "now Countesse." This is the poem referred to by Mr. Sidney Lee (*Dictionary of National Biography*, article Lydgate, vol. xxxiv, 307), as the "XV Odes," an odd mistake for the "Fifteen Ooes," so called because each stanza begins with O. The title of "Fifteen Ooes" belongs properly, however, to the *Ooes of Christ*, an entirely different poem by Lydgate. Mr. Lee is further in error in assigning Stowe as his authority for the rubric here noted. Stowe had nothing to do with the Titus MS.

<sup>7</sup> Mentioned above.

But the following extract from another source will not be unwelcome, I think, as a brilliant picture of a typical scene in the revival of chivalry in the fifteenth century.<sup>1</sup> I am not aware that this description of the challenge has up to now been identified with a feat of this Earl of Warwick, or that it has ever been printed.

The account to which I refer is one of many narratives of challenges, and joustes, collected for Sir John Paston about 1470, I suppose (Paston died 1479). The narrative here given thus antedates by a dozen years the account in the Cotton ms., the date of which Sir E. Maunde Thompson gives as 1485-95. But the present extract is far earlier than this in reality, as several references in the ms. point to its being a contemporary account. Thus fol. 16b we have "the xiiith day of Cristmasse *last*." Again the frequent phrase "my lorde" indicates that the Earl is still alive. On the same page Gerard Herbawmes is referred to as alive and lately challenging English warriors. Finally at the end of the narrative the present and perfect tenses are used, showing that the fame of the meeting is still sounded.

The extract here given is also interesting, since it or a narrative identical with it was plainly condensed to make up the account in the Cotton ms., an almost literal copy of which may be read in Dugdale's *Warwickshire* (1730), I, 406-7. The single variation from the narrative here is that the third encounter relates how Richard rushed upon the knight and smote him until the Frenchman said he was tied to his saddle; upon which Richard alighted and rode to his pavilion, the feast being served thereafter. This episode is, I believe, borrowed from some other tournament and inserted here for picturesque effect. It may be that the details of the third encounter are omitted in our narrative because

<sup>1</sup> From ms. Lansdowne 285 (British Museum) ff. 16-17.

of the knight's relationship to the Beauchamps, for one of whom this narrative may have been written.

MS. Lansdowne 285, fols 16a-17b.

The challenge of an Auncestre of therle of Warrewyk.

Ffirst the seide lorde departid oute of Caleis to Guynes by watir thee tuisday aftir Cristmas day, for to take the eire and disporte of the Countrey, as he saide. And all his Armure and his harneis for his Armes was pryvily caried thidir. And nerehand a foortnyght before Cristmasse my lorde lete set vp a pavilon, within the parclos of Guynesse, and lete hange therin thre tables of the devisez depeyntid. The first a lady standyng and harpyng at a beddis feete with a Gratoure of golde for a Spere tacchid on hir Sleve and sent an haraude into ffraunce, that what kynght that was borne Gentilman of name and armes withoute Reproche within the Reem of ffraunce that wolde touche that devise, there shulde a knyght that clepith hym Le Chiualer Vert oue<sup>1</sup> le quarter noir, that was borne in Englonde Gentilman of name and Armes withoute Reproche shulde delyuer that frenshe knyght of XII Cours hit on horsbak with Speres of oon length and Sheeldis of oon makyng, of the which Sheeldis the frenshe knyght shulde choose the bettir, and hereupon my lorde sent his letres ensealde with his Armes that he berith of Siluir with the maunchet of Goules as they bee enbrowdid in þe seide lords white bedde of berys.<sup>2</sup> Secondly he let hong vp in the same pavylyne a noothir table of his devise portreied with a lady wirchyng perles with a Glove of plate of Golde fol. 16b. tacchid on hir Sleve and sent by the same heraude into the Reame of ffraunce that what knyght that was borne Gentelman of name and armes withoute Reproche of the Reame of ffraunce that wolde touche that devise, he shulde fynde a knyght of Englonde borne Gentilman of name of Armis withoute Reproche, the which clepith him le Chiualer gryse, that shulde delyuer the frenshe knyght of xv strokys with a swerde hitte for the which Armes the Englishe knyght shulde ordeygne twey Sadles and send the frenshe knyght choise of both. And herevpon sent my lorde his letres sealde with his Armes of Silvyr with twey barris of Goules as they ben also wele enbrowdid in the same white bedde of berys. The thridde my seide lorde lete hong vp in the same pavylyne anothir table of his devise with a lady depeyntid in a Gardyne makyng a Chaplet of Roses, with a poleyne of golde in the same pavylyne tacchid on the seide lady Sleve, and sent by the same heraude that what knyght of the Reame of fraunce, that

<sup>1</sup> *Oue* for *o*. Dugdale, *l. c.*, p. 406, reads from Cotton MS. "the green knight with a black quarter."

<sup>2</sup> The Warwick bear is well known, of course.

was borne Gentilman of name and Armes withoute Reproche, that wolde touche the thrid devise, he shulde fynde a knyght of Englonde Gentilman borne of name and of Armes withoute Reproche that clepith hym Le Chiualer attendaunt, that shulde delyuer that frenshe knyght of x Cours hit with speres of oon length in hosteyng harneis withoute sheldis. And herevpon my lorde sent his *letres* sealde with his Armes quarterly golde & goules bordu redd with siluyr and azure verrid as they ben wele enbrowdid in the same bedde of Berys.

So whan this heraude was thus delyuerd theise thre lettres of my lordis ensealde with dyuers seals of his Armys And wroten of dyuers handys he Rode into ffrance and declarid his messages Amonges alle the lordis knyghtis & Squyers of honoure that were that tyme come doune into the marchis of pycardye for the werre: And vpon the shewyng of theise *letres* which the heraude brought; Weenyng the frenshemen that it were three knyghtes of Englonde that had hongid vp thoo thre devises. The first frenshe knyght clepid hym in his *letre* Le chiualer Rouge to whom the Right name is Sir Gerard herbaumes, a Seemely man and oon of the best Justers of ffrance accountid And is oon of the xv frenshemen that have now late Chalengid xv English men to the outraunce, they beryng a plate of goolde for their devise till their Armes be doon. And this day of Armys with my seide lorde set vpon the xiiith day of Cristmasse last vpon the which day my lorde came into the felde at xii at thee klok, the fairest

fol. 17a. Armyd man and the Surest that evir was seen before that tyme, with basyned on his hede and visoure downe for he wolde not be knowe, with an vncouthly freshe Chaplet wrought of dyuers colours of ffeithirs & perles vpon his basynet, A fyne girdill of golde large about the nethir bordure of his plates, and his spere xv Inches large aboute, which was right grete woonder to all the frenshemen that evir man myght welde so grete tymbre. And than my lorde sent the twoo Sheldis to his felowe to choose as the purport of his *letre* wolde, which Sheeldes were of lethir nat als thyk as the thyknes of vi papir leves. And so my seide lorde and the frenshe knyght ran to gider with hir speeris woondir knyghtly, And brake their speris and either parcid othir harneys, but thonkid be god, at the thrid Cours my lorde smote downe þe frenshe knyght at the spere poynt hors and man. And so whan the Armes of that day was doon my lorde sent to the frenshe knyght a feire coureser to his tent. Vpon the morowe my lorde came into the felde to accomplishe the seconde armes with Swerde after the entent of his *letre* Armyd in the godelyest wise as seiden all the Straungers that evir was seen with a frenshe Creste of Ostrigge ffeithers of golde compacid with a white Chaplet aboue his basynet. And ronnen to gidirs an hors bak. So that my lorde smote the kniȝte that clepid hym in his *letre* le Chiualer blank, to whom the Right name is *monsieur* hugh de lawncy, that he recoild hym to his hors behynde. And an oothir stroke smote vp his visoure, And evir thankid be god had much the bettir by all

mennes iuggement. And so to his high woorschip fulfillid the poyntis of his Armes and evir his vmbrere downe for he wolde not be knowen in the felde And at his departyng oute of the felde my lorde sent his felowe a feire coureser And ypon Soonday aftir my lorde came into the felde aboute ix of the klok Armyd bright with a Rounde brode tofte of Ostrich fethirs spreynthe with golde And a long tartaryn fethir in the myddis with a brode Girdill of Goldsmythis werk rounde aboute his plates beneth to performe his Armes in hosteyng harneis as his letre contenyth, A courser trappid with his Armes of Warre embrowdid to fore hym on the which Rode oon Botiller, And behynde hym came three Coursers trappid in thre Armys of his Armys Accordaunt to the seals of his thre Armes to foresaide. And the same trappers folowid hym eche day of the three dayes, oonly to the touchyng of the devise ; so that these Armes were wele and worshupfully accomplissid to the grettist Woorschup of my lorde both of the frenshemen

fol. 17b. And also of all the Souleours of these marche that evir had man in Pykardye, blessid be god of his grace ! And sent his felowe a noothir Courser which knyght is callid le Chiualer noir, to whom the Right name is Messir Colarde de fyennes, the whiche is my lordis Cousyn, And by that that theis Armys were thus doon, my lorde sittying on horsbak in þe felde armed praide all the frenshe men to dyne with hym there Right in the felde.

In the which felde was ordeyned an halle muche and large in the which was hangid the white bedde with all theise Armes that the frenshemen myght wele see that the were verely his Armys of olde Auncestrie and there the frenshe men hadd a gret feest of thre Courses, cc messes large. And a thousonde mo persones that yeetyn in the felde had mette Inowgh & drynk also ryght largely.

So whan the spices and wyne was droonke my lorde yave *sir* Gerard de herbaumes the first frenshe knyght an Owche better than *livres*. 18 ; To *sir* hugh de lawncy an oche woorth xi marcs ; and to Sir Colarde de fyennes which is Cousyn to the Erle Seintpoule and to my lorde also, A cupp of Golde woorth ix marcs. And this doon they departid and the frenshemen helde them passyngly wele Apaide, And large yiftes gevyng to the frenshe heraudes and mynsterells And all this feste tyme lastyng the fairest wethir that evir sigh Cristen man. So that all maner men in this marche, thonkid be god, gevyng to my seide lorde the pryce of all men that evire came there and seyne playnely that god had shewyd passyng grete myracles in hym. And this on the Monday aftir he is coomen to Coleys with much woorschip where hath met hym the lieutenaunt of the towne with all the Garnyson.

To complete our picture of this valiant knight we have only to add a bit of the narrative from the Cotton ms. relating to the Earl and his countess. In 1437 "Erle

Richerd when he with his navy toke the salt water, in short space rose a grevous tempest and drofe the shippes into diverse coostes in so moch that they al fered to be perissshed. And the noble Erle, forcastyng, lete bynde hymself and his lady and Henry his sone and heire, after Duc of Warrewik, to the mast of the vessel to thentent that where ever they were founde they myght have beene buried to gedres worshipfully by the knowledge of his cote armour and other signes uppon hym. But yet God preserved hem al; and so retourned to Englund and after to Normandy.”<sup>1</sup>

## II.

But whither am I slipped? Earl Richard, while preferring military glory, was not averse to clerklly wit, and thus showed that he had profited by reading the famous *Dialogus inter Clericum et Militem*, his own copy of which, bound in a volume along with Higden’s *Polychronicon*, and a *Sermon against Friars*, is still to be seen.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the *Virelai* here printed has some artistic merit and is as good as was done, in his time, so far as may be known. Of this form of the *Virelai* I know of no other example in Middle English.

The ms. British Museum, Additional 16165, from which this is copied, is a quarto volume, paper, written by Shirley. The rubric is his, and may be credited, as certainly as any unique ascription can be, for Shirley except in ms. Ashmole 59, written in his last age, rarely went wrong. But we must await Miss Hammond’s study of Shirley<sup>3</sup> before pass-

<sup>1</sup> Copied from ms. Cotton Julius E IV, fol. 25b. This episode is not quoted by Sir E. M. Thompson, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Brit. Mus. Add. 24194.

<sup>3</sup> See her remarks on Shirley in *Modern Philology*, I, 330 ff., *Anglia* xxviii, 1 ff., xxx, 320–348. O. Gaertner’s recent dissertation, *Johan Shirley’s Leben und Werke* (Berlin, 1906), is useless for this purpose.

ing any judgment on the authority of this MS. as compared with others of the same scribe. We have, however, no ground for doubting Shirley's statement, and every reason to believe that Richard Beauchamp was quite capable of this gallant effusion to his lady.

## THE VIRELAI.

Ms. Brit. Mus. Adds 16165, fols. 245b.-246b.

"Balade made of Isabelle Countasse of Warr', and lady Despenser by Richard Beauchamp Eorlle of Warrewyk."

I can not half þe woo compleyne  
 þat doþe my woful hert streyne  
 With bisy thought and grevous peyne,  
 Whan I not see  
 5 My feyre lady whos beaute  
 So fully preented is in me  
 þat I for wo naduersite  
 May not astert  
 From hir good list, þat never thwert  
 10 I shal, howe sore þat me smert,  
 But right humbely with lowly hert  
 Hir ordenaunce  
 Obeye, and in hir governaunce  
 Set al my welfare and plesaunce,  
 15 Abydyng tyme of allegeaunce,  
 And never swerve  
 fol. 245a. Til þat þe dethe myn hert kerve ;  
 For lever is me hir man to sterve  
 Than any oþer for to serve.  
 20 For hir noblesse,  
 Hir flouryng youþe in lustynesse,  
 Grownded in vertuous humblesse,  
 Causeþe þat she cleped is maystresse,—

- I yow ensure,—  
 25 Of al good chaunce and aventure  
 þat may be gyven by nature  
 Til any worldly creature ;  
 For she alloone  
 In vertue is, and þer haþe noon,—  
 30 —þus seyne boþe sume and eureych oon,—  
 þat dele wyth hir, and euer in oon  
 Preyse hir maner,  
 Hir wommanhed, hir lusty chere,—  
 So wold god ! my lady dere,  
 35 At my request and my prayer  
 Yow list to ruwe  
 On me hir man þat hole and truwe  
 Haue been, and chaunged for no nuwe,  
 Ne never wol myn hert remuwe  
 40 From hir servyce ;  
 And þat is myn hertis empyrse,  
 Beseching hir þat in some wyse  
 She wol for my guerdon avyse,  
 And wommanly,  
 fol. 246b. 45. Counsayled by pitous mercy,  
 Resceyve me þat hevyly  
 Endure þus, and pytously,  
 In to hir grace ;  
 And whyles þat I haue lyves space,  
 50 Owt of myn hert to arrace  
 þe descomfort þat me manasse  
 Depe in my thought ;  
 But of she þer of no thing rought,  
 And I be lytell worthe or nought,  
 55 Hir wommanhed certis ought  
 And gentylesse

To ruwe vpon myn hevynesse,  
 For hir to serve in stedfastnesse,  
 Myn hert, and al my bysynesse,

60    Haue I gyve  
       For euermore whyles þat I lyve.

NOTES.—The rubric is in Shirley's hand, but evidently written in after the copying of the poem. The title of the poem as at first copied was merely, "Balade." The ink of the rest of the rubric differs from this word.

The paragraphing is mine. Shirley divided the poem into quatrains, a a a b, b b b c, etc. The division is not made by spacing, but by marks on the margin, and thus my only change has been to set rhyming lines together, in order better to indicate the swing of the song.

I have taken no liberties with the text, except to substitute F for the old ff, which is nearly always used for capital F in the fifteenth century mss.

Suggested readings. In ll. 4, 17, 50, for *hert*, *herte*. L. 17, *dethe*, *deth*. L. 34, *wold*, *wolde*. L. 53, *of*, *if*.

Ll. 29 ff., present a difficult question. Line 29 does not make sense as it stands. I suggest (1) for *per* read *oper*; (2) we have here an anacoluthon, in which the poet was misled by the parenthetical line 30, to substitute the subject and structure of the parenthetical line for the subject already given. The sense would be, then, "there hath none dealt with her that doth not always praise her manner, etc., thus says everyone." I incline to this second guess as to the meaning, on account of the exceedingly loose, and withal charming, construction throughout.

HENRY NOBLE MACCRACKEN.